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THE INDIAN TODAY

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*James Sewid,  
owner of three  
salmon seiners*







## THE INDIAN TODAY

They were once said to be a dying race . . .

Today Indians are the fastest-growing ethnic group in Canada — 190,000 strong. By 1964 they will number over 200,000.

The majority live on 2,200 reserves or Crown lands set aside for their exclusive use; 16 per cent live in non-Indian communities.

Indians are listed as members of “bands”. There are over 550 bands in Canada.

Indians live in every province though almost half are in Ontario and British Columbia.

They vary in their history, their culture and their development from one part of the country to another.

Back in time the Indians drifted in slow waves of migration out of Asia and across the Bering Straits into Alaska, fanning out across the North American continent.

When the Europeans arrived there were about 200,000 Indians scattered across Canada. They occupied village sites and roamed over vast hunting grounds. So small a population in so large a country needed no individual land ownership. But when the Europeans began to settle the continent — as opposed to exploring or trading within it — the interests of the settler-farmers came into conflict with those of the Indian hunter. As a result, over a period of many years, agreements were reached between Indians and non-Indians under which reserves were set up for use in perpetuity by Indian bands.

The Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration administers the Indian Act. Government policy aims toward the eventual integration of Indians into the mainstream of Canadian life, while recognizing their right to maintain their own cultural identity.

Among other matters, the Branch looks after the schooling of Indian children, provides social welfare services, helps Indians to find jobs, makes grants for housing, administers trust monies from the sale and lease of reserve lands and helps individuals and groups launch commercial enterprises such as fishing or logging projects. Education of Indians in the Northwest Territories is under the care of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Health services are provided by the Indian and Northern Health Services of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

Several terms are used in connection with Indian affairs. Here are some:

“BAND”—means a group of Indians who share a common interest such as land, money, or both, and who generally have a common historical association with a traditional village or tribal unit. It is the basic unit of Indian administration. The largest is the 7,000-strong Six Nations, near Brantford, Ontario.

“RESERVE”—means a tract of land set aside for the exclusive use and benefit of the Indians. There are 2,200 reserves in Canada. Not all reserves are occupied. Some are only a few acres (as in British Columbia) while the largest is 500 square miles. In Eastern Canada one band generally inhabits one reserve; in the West one band may occupy or own more than one. In British Columbia for example, 195 bands own 1,619 reserves.

“AGENCY”—means an administrative unit responsible for one or more bands. In the Caughnawaga Agency, for example, there is only one band. By contrast, the New Westminster Agency lists 32 bands with 82 reserves. There are 89 agencies across Canada.

“SUPERINTENDENT”—means the official in charge of an agency, but the old title of “Indian Agent” is still widely, although incorrectly, used.

“BAND FUNDS”— means monies derived from Indian assets. In the early days of colonization, money was obtained from the

sale of reserve lands. Today band fund income is derived mainly from the lease of reserve lands, sales of timber and gravel, and disposal of oil and gas rights. Some bands have over a million dollars, some a few thousand and a few, nothing. In the past some bands chose reserves which have since proved rich in oil and minerals. Others selected reserves more suitable for hunting and fishing. Bands may use their money for any purpose benefiting the band, such as roads, housing, water and sewer systems and community halls.

“BAND COUNCIL”—means a group of Indians chosen or elected by band members to administer band affairs. They are similar to rural township councils.

“ENFRANCHISEMENT”—is the term used when an Indian voluntarily gives up his status under the Indian Act and thereby ceases to be entitled to the rights and privileges which the Act provides. On leaving the band an Indian receives his share of his band's monies. In the 1960-61 fiscal year 954 Indians were enfranchised, most of them women who married non-Indians.

## **THE INDIAN “QUESTION”**

Canadians sometimes talk of “the Indian question”, and many do not look upon the Indian as a full citizen of Canada. What is this so-called “Indian problem?”

In essence it is this: the Indian is too often an outsider in our society. His reserve is palisaded with psychological barriers which have prevented close social and economic contact between Indian and non-Indian.

It is the policy of the government to help the Indian, caught in an age of transition, to adapt himself to a larger and more complex society, to be able to earn a living within that society if he wishes to do so.

But there are many factors which inhibit the Indian in his adaptation to a mid-twentieth century technological world. Most are but dimly understood.

First there is the Indian's attitude towards his reserve. This is his “home”—as the small town is to many rural Canadians.



Yet, the reserve is something more. It is also a "retreat". Many Indians still consider the European took away the land and in return gave them a poor bargain — a reserve, free education, a small annuity, sometimes weapons for hunting. Many Indians find it hard to understand the past as an historical fact. The white man wanted to settle and till the land, and few people were genuinely concerned about the exploitation of the Indian. The reserve system was originally a guarantee of protection against further exploitation. This is one reason for the great reverence paid by the Indian to the treaties. In a world of flux, a treaty is a promise to cling to.

The reserve is more than a protection; it is "home". As such it has interesting connotations for the Indian. Some, who venture into urban society seeking jobs, feel that the reserve is a place to go back to if they become lonely and disappointed and unable to make the adjustment to off-reserve life. Other Canadians from rural areas, seeking employment in the big cities, often react the same way.

To an increasing number of Indians, however, the reserve community is a good springboard from which to take employment in neighbouring centres — and even in cities well away from the reserve. Take the Mohawk high-steel workers from Caughnawaga, for example. Many live in New York City, though they travel widely in their jobs. Yet these families pay frequent visits to the reserve near Montreal — which to them, is "home".

In general, however, the Indian faces serious problems when trying to make a living, both on and off the reserves: the average school level and saleable skills of the Indians across Canada are lower than the national average—through no fault of the Indians. With the massive educational efforts now being made by the federal government, however, these gaps are rapidly being closed.

The Indian's traditional attitude towards making a living is often different from the non-Indian. In the past—and still prevalent to some extent—is the idea of living only for today. The meat prepared for today is eaten today and shared with others; tomorrow someone else will have food to share. The non-Indian



ideas of putting money in the bank for a rainy day, of saving to-day in order to buy desirable goods tomorrow, seem confusing and somehow unacceptable.

The Indian has also found it difficult to recover from the social disorganization of the tribal groups caused by the advent of European settlers. Thus many have acquired certain inhibitions vis-a-vis the non-Indian. They are hesitant about accepting the values and standards of a fast-paced, non-Indian civilization.

Gradually, as the Canadian conscience stirs, there is increasing acceptance of the Indian as a Canadian citizen. Younger Indians are raising their educational levels and leaving the reserves in search of jobs in the cities. Indians are already in professions such as law, medicine, nursing, teaching, business administration, radio and television, as well as in factories and offices. Many hold skilled technical jobs.

These show, by example, that given education and steady employment, the Indian has proven his ability to take his place on a basis of equality in Canadian society.

From other Canadians, the Indian has a right to expect understanding in preference to sympathy, respect instead of condescension.

## THE CHALLENGE OF EDUCATION

Indians realize more and more that without adequate basic education, they are restricted in their job opportunities, and in fulfilling their desires and potentialities.

In no other segment of Canadian education has pupil enrolment grown as it has in Indian schools. In the 1961-62 school year, 46,596 — or nearly one quarter of Canada's Indians — were attending school and the cost of Indian education was \$29,000,000. A great many face difficulties not common to other students. Brought up in different cultural traditions, they must adjust in school to a western, non-Indian culture. As language is the essential tool of communication, they must learn either French or English. Usually they have been brought up

to speak their own tongues, which are structurally different from the European languages. Often their native tongue is the one commonly used in their homes. Most think in their native languages, or at least in their native cultural patterns. There are many cases in which the homes are not conducive to good study habits.



Surveys reveal, however, that all things being equal, the Indian student is every bit as curious, alert and intelligent as the non-Indian.

Indians receive their education in three ways: in Indian schools, among their own people; in provincial schools, among non-Indian students; or, as is usually the case at present, in Indian schools during their early years and at provincial schools in the higher grades. The policy of the Indian Affairs Branch is to integrate Indian students wherever possible into non-Indian schools.

There are two major types of Indian schools, (day and residential) and two minor types (seasonal and hospital).

**DAY SCHOOLS** — There are 377 elementary schools on reserves, attended by 20,572, or nearly half the school-age Indian children in Canada.

**SEASONAL SCHOOLS** — In some northern areas it is possible to establish seasonal day schools at places where migratory bands congregate at their base communities in summer. While they can only give a child a limited academic background, they enable him to keep contact with a trapping-hunting-fishing mode of life pursued by his parents and which he himself may well follow in later years. The trend today is for seasonal schools to evolve into day schools as communities become more stable.

**RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS** — These are boarding schools for homeless children, orphans, children whose parents are in hospitals, who are unable to care for them. Of the 66 residential schools, 57 are owned by the government and administered by one of four religious denominations, Roman Catholic (nearly all by the Oblates), the Anglican Church of Canada, the United Church and the Presbyterian Church. Six schools are church-owned and the government pays a yearly grant. Three are hostels. Classroom enrolment of boarders is 8,391; another 2,329

children attend as day pupils; 1,490 live in the residential schools while attending non-Indian schools.

**HOSPITAL SCHOOLS** — There are nine schools at sanatoria.

Indian schools follow the provincial curriculum and are inspected by provincial inspectors.

The past ten years have seen a spectacular growth in the integration of Indian students into non-Indian schools. In 1949 there were 1,406 Indian children attending non-Indian schools; in the 1961-62 school year the number had risen to 18,486.

The policy of the Indian Affairs Branch is not to operate secondary schools, although some schools offer courses at the high school level. Most Indian students therefore attend provincial high schools and, if necessary, the government pays board and lodging for those who live away from home. While the percentage of Indian children passing from grade eight into high school is below the non-Indian level, there has been a definite acceleration: in 1949, 611 Indians attended grades 9 to 13, in 1962 the total was 3,351.

Indian parents are becoming increasingly aware of the value of good schooling. In 1957 band councils were empowered to elect school committees. Thirty have been formed to date. They help to maintain attendance and punctuality, take care of school property and supervise extra-curricular activities. They also help to stimulate parental and community interest in education. There are, in addition, many parent-teacher groups on the reserves.

## **THE INDIAN AT WORK** (Economics)

In mid-twentieth century perhaps up to 90 percent of the Indians support themselves by more than one job. Although they are slowly changing, the work patterns of the Indian still are geared to seasonal employment. This is a significant characteristic of Indian life which is not widely known.

Some Indians live and work on the reserves; some live on the reserves but work outside, commuting each day or weekend; some live and work in non-Indian communities and go "home" only occasionally.



Some people still think of the Indian as a trapper, hunter, basket maker, or farmer. Yet the Indian makes his living in as many different ways as other Canadians. He's a deep sea fisherman on the west coast, a rancher on the prairies, a sales manager in Montreal, a factory worker in Peterborough, a potato grower in the Maritimes. He's a wood carver, a road builder, a miner, a logger. It all depends on his inclination, his education, his ambition, his location.

Individual Indians have entered fields as diverse as business, public relations, professional hockey, nursing, law, the ministry and medicine. One hundred and twelve Indians are employed by Indian Affairs as teachers, and one hundred and forty work in agency, regional and head offices.

On the reserve itself, the Indian is broadening his work horizons. To assist him in his small business operations, the Indian Affairs Branch established a Revolving Loan Fund of \$350,000. Because of demand it was later increased to \$1,000,000. Its purpose is to provide short term loans. These are to be paid back over periods up to five years at five per cent simple interest. Financial help is also available from public funds to provide equipment and supplies to enable Indians to participate in economic development projects. Indians also use their own band funds for these purposes.

## **HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE**

In 1957 the Indian Affairs Branch launched a placement programme to help Indians find employment, both on and off the reserves.

Such a programme had become a necessity. Better health had resulted in an upsurge of the Indian population; great strides had been made in improving education; the changing economy of the reserves was forcing people in many areas to turn from natural resources to wage employment. It was recognized that the future of many Indians, especially young people who had opportunities for higher education, lay in their integration into the industrial economy of Canada.

The programme began with three officers. Now there are 14. They are located at Vancouver, Prince George, Whitehorse, Fort Smith (N.W.T.), Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, The Pas, North Bay, London, Toronto, Quebec City and Amherst.

Their aims: with the assistance of the National Employment Service, to help Indians find jobs, especially in a wider variety of occupations than in the past; to train and assist Indians now engaged in a wild crop and wildlife harvesting economy to adopt wage employment as a way of life, and to help selected Indians with the necessary training and experience to achieve permanent establishment in an industrial society.

There are two distinct aspects of the programme: general placement and permanent placement.

GENERAL PLACEMENT—The aim is to place as many Indians as possible in wage employment, initially in labouring jobs, mainly in primary industries. This part of the programme is chiefly, but not exclusively geared for people in the more remote areas, away from industrial centres. Indians make fine workers in their natural environment, for example, in road clearing, pulp cutting, logging, construction, mining, forest fire fighting.

PERMANENT PLACEMENT—This is mainly for young people and is a highly selective plan to help them bridge the gap between reserve and city life. In southern B.C., southern Ontario, Quebec and to a lesser extent the Maritimes, the majority of candidates enter the programme following higher academic or vocational training sponsored by the Branch. In other regions where educational levels are lower, the pattern is somewhat different. While the number entering the programme following higher training is growing, the majority have no specific work skills and minimal education. These usually require academic upgrading and social orientation followed by vocational courses or on-the-job-training to prepare them for employment.

The move from reserve to city presents problems, particularly because these young people are also moving from one culture to another. Loneliness affects most rural people in the city, whether they are Indian or not. In many cities there are now

social groups where the Indian can meet his friends. The Toronto Indian Youth Club is a typical example. There, the young people meet every fortnight, conduct their own meetings, play basketball or other games, hold dances and social evenings and often invite non-Indians to their activities.

A second problem is the Indian's own lack of skills for work in an urban society. Through vocational training he is learning new skills. But still he must learn about basic conventions—the need for promptness and regular attendance, employer-employee interviews, trade unions, salary deductions, income tax, unemployment insurance, pension schemes, workman's compensation, credit resources of non-Indian centres.

His third problem is within himself, to learn to adjust to a new society. To assist in this process, guidance is provided by the placement staff. In cases where continued counselling is needed the services of community welfare organizations are used. In several centres formal agreements have been developed with family service agencies to provide this counselling as part of the total plan for establishment.

Many thousands of Indians have been placed in seasonal employment since the placement programme began. A further 1,100 young people have been established in permanent employment in non-Indian communities. They are proof that with help and training, the Indian can make an effective contribution to the economy of the country.



*Yesterday . . .  
& today*





*Commercial fishing is a source of income*



*Today  
(Same time!)*



*Art is a subject in which Indian students excel*

*Feeding time at the Charles Camsell Hospital, Edmonton*





*A student in mechanics class of vocational course*

*A quilting "bee"*







*Qualified Indian teachers of the Ohsweken Central Day School*

*Chief Mary Pius of Fort George, B.C.*



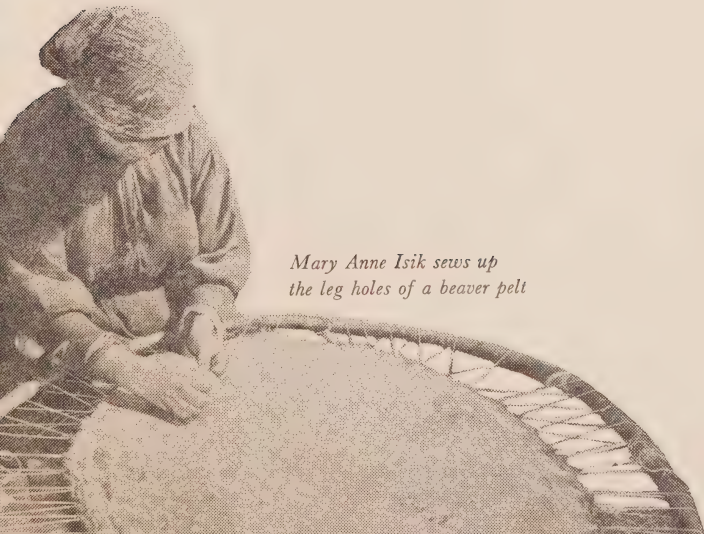
## THE WILDLIFE HARVESTS

Half the Indians in Canada gain most of their livelihood directly from the resources of nature. They are trappers, fishermen or wood workers. They supplement their income from other seasonal jobs.

Most of the others, even those with year-round work, earn extra money by doing a little hunting, trapping or fishing, craftwork, berry, rice and potato picking, guiding or catching frogs.

The policy is to encourage Indians to seek full-time jobs and benefit from a steady income. But there are those who want to live by gathering the products of nature, or must of necessity do so because they live in remote areas.

Despite the ups and downs of the market, the beaver remains the most important single animal, both as a source of money and food in areas where trapping is the chief source of livelihood. In the Quebec fur preserve areas, for example, Indians in 1961 produced 23,700 beaver pelts and received \$306,500. Just as important to these nomadic trappers, however, were the quarter million pounds of meat these animals provided.



*Mary Anne Isik sews up  
the leg holes of a beaver pelt*

With the long-range objective of restoring this basic industry to economic stability, the Department works closely with the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. Huge tracts of land have been set aside as trapping preserves; beaver and other fur-bearers have often been flown in and released; conservation is practised widely, and new management techniques are being developed. The most striking feature is the admission of the Indian trappers themselves into partnership in the programme. Enforcement by game wardens has been slashed and trappers are complying with conservation regulations, not because some one orders them to do so but because they know it is in their interest.

The Indian proved himself to be a first-rate conservationist: during the development of these preserves no enforcement was necessary and not a single prosecution was instituted. Government officers supervise the census taking, allot quotas, collect, grade and ship the pelts to market and turn the proceeds over to the Indians.

First of the fur rehabilitation projects was the muskrat programme in the Saskatchewan delta near The Pas, Manitoba, which in 20 years has yielded trappers over \$2,000,000. The annual revenue from Saskatchewan wild fur is now \$2,500,000; 80 per cent of the trappers in the province are Indians or Métis.

Despite these development programmes, which have been the salvation of many northern bands, trapping remains a precarious way of earning a living. It is dependent on the cycles of nature and the whims of the market.

Of more importance to the Indian economy has been the remarkable growth of commercial fishing. West coast Indians have a long record of successful fishing operations and are highly organized in the salmon, crab, herring and halibut fisheries. Many have their own seiners and make their own arrangements with canneries for marketing. However, these operations are becoming increasingly competitive and only the most efficient Indian fishermen are able to make a living in the industry today.

But the really important developments in commercial fishing in recent years are on the inland lakes.



Indians, to compete successfully with non-Indians, have been provided with nets and equipment on a repayable basis. In areas where transportation costs are high, the federal government itself has launched commercial projects.

On the east shores of James Bay, for example, fieldmen have helped Indians to develop a profitable sturgeon fishery. Fish are flown to the nearest railhead, iced and shipped to Montreal for sale at current market prices.

Among seasonal occupations rice picking is a good example of how the fluctuations of nature can affect the income of Indians. Rice is harvested in southern Manitoba, in the Kenora region of Ontario and around the Rice and Mud Lakes region of Peterborough. In Manitoba the 1953 harvest was 29,000 pounds; three years later it jumped to a record 488,000; the year following it dropped to 88,000.

Manitoba Indians have found a new seasonal job in frog-catching, started in 1957 by fish companies in response to the need of fishermen for off-season employment. Shipments are to the U.S. mid-west. Large frogs are for food, small ones for lab work.

Seasonal jobs vary widely. Maritime Indians harvest oysters in Malpeque Bay, P.E.I., help in potato and berry picking in Canada and Maine, cut Christmas trees, fish for lobster and make potato baskets.

Quebec Indians are well-known guides. Ontario Indians find seasonal jobs in the row crop areas of the southwestern parts of the province. On the prairies and in the Cariboo region of B.C. Indians find jobs such as making hay and cutting rails for fences on the cattle and grain farms. Many western Indians migrate to the beet fields of Alberta and Manitoba and to the fruit and hop fields in Oregon and Washington states.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE

In Canada there are 22 hospitals, 30 clinics, 79 health centres and 33 nursing stations for the care of Indians and Eskimos. They are administered by the Indian and Northern Health Services of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

Local hospitals are used also for the treatment of Indians. Doctors and dentists provide part-time service in their own communities. In the North hundreds of volunteers in small outposts act as dispensers, distributing medical supplies and administering first aid.

Tuberculosis, once a dreaded killer, has passed its climax. Though it remains a serious disease, the rate is falling each year.

Thus health service is provided to more than 2,200 different reserves, many in isolated regions. The key figure in Indian health is the graduate nurse, working from her residence-cum-office on the reserve. She runs the out-patient, well-baby and pre-natal clinics. She stresses the values of cleanliness in the home. She talks to children in the schools. She gives classes in first aid and home nursing care. She arranges for immunization and chest x-rays. Her work is devoted to a long lesson in health education and her influence extends into every home. In a few areas the Indians are still suspicious of the white man's medicine.

Physically handicapped Indians discharged from hospitals are helped either through Indian Affairs Branch or provincial programmes. Most provinces extend normal vocational training to Indians. Some Indians, however, need extra classwork to be eligible for vocational courses. They need also to be taught to adjust to a non-Indian society.

In Alberta and Manitoba there is a new concept in rehabilitation. When selected young people, usually unmarried, and wishing to be trained for urban jobs, are discharged from hospital, they are given training to help them bridge the gap between hospital and urban life. In Edmonton the men, and some of the women, board with city families and are trained by the Indian Affairs Branch. In Brandon they enter a rehabilitation wing of the sanatorium but one providing an informal, home-like atmosphere. In both centres these young people are not only given academic and vocational training, but are taught the day-to-day habits of a non-Indian culture. Thus Indians, once hospital patients, are now working as stenographers, hairdressers, telephone operators, shoemakers, cabinet makers, mechanics and in other trades.

In other provinces rehabilitation is carried out on an individual ad hoc basis. In the broader field of social welfare, major

changes have been taking place in the past few years. Indian Affairs Branch does not attempt to duplicate the wide network of welfare services provided by provincial, municipal and private agencies across the country. Rather, the policy is to negotiate with these agencies for the extension of the same services to meet similar needs of Indian peoples.

A few years ago Indians were generally considered to be wards of the Crown; that day is past. Today there is increasingly fruitful cooperation between the three levels of government and private agencies. Indians off their reserves can now get welfare assistance from most provincial, municipal and private agencies — like any other citizen. In addition, all Indians are eligible for social security benefits such as family allowance, old age security, old age assistance, blind persons' allowance and disabled persons' allowance. They also share equally in such benefits as hospital and unemployment insurance.

Progress has also been made on the reserves. Today, child welfare services are available on certain reserves in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia and in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. In addition to the many professional social workers in provincial programmes whose services are available to Indians, the Branch employs 17 social workers in its overall welfare programme.

Other basic provincial welfare programmes are gradually being extended to reserve communities. In Ontario, for example, Indian bands are administering their own relief assistance under provincial legislation. They appoint their own paid welfare administrators and qualify for the same provincial subsidies as any other non-Indian municipality.

In areas where provincial programmes are not available, Indians on reserves receive welfare assistance through the local Indian agency. Federal assistance is comparable to that provided in neighbouring non-Indians communities.

This new policy is reflected in the manner of providing assistance. In April, 1959, the former system of giving specified food items for relief was abolished. Instead, relief is now given through cash or credit vouchers with which Indians can buy the kind of food they want. At the same time the amount of assistance was raised to non-Indian standards.



Increasingly, bands on more progressive reserves are assuming responsibility for their own welfare programmes, and welfare committees are playing an important part in this development.

## THE INDIAN COMMUNITY

In 1945, in the face of an exploding population living on reserves where few new houses had been built for 20 years, the federal government launched a major programme of housing for Indians.

The depression and war years had reduced 75 per cent of Indian housing to an inferior quality. By non-Indian standards, many reserves seemed like depressed areas. Over-crowding was rife. New housing was imperative. Without better housing, health and education programmes would be futile.

The government is making money available for housing each year on a grant basis, providing the individual home owner contributes as much as he can in materials, labour and cash. In some cases, the Indian is able to offer only his labour. In the decade ending in 1961, 10,643 new homes were built.

In 1960 a survey revealed that almost 25 per cent of reserve houses were still far from adequate and almost 7,000 new houses were needed as soon as possible. The government had doubled the housing grant in 1958, and boosted it still further to \$2,750,000 a year in 1962 — and a further \$2,000,000 is being contributed yearly from band funds and by individuals. In the last five years, 5,818 new homes were built. Although the population is increasing, the backlog is being reduced.

Government funds are provided because under the land-holding system on reserves, an Indian cannot provide collateral and is unable to arrange for a housing loan through normal channels. To offset this disability, the federal government is now working out plans for a housing loan fund.

The long-range objective of the Indian Affairs Branch is the development of Indian communities with adequate standards of housing, hygiene and essential services which will provide a base for the economic, educational, health and welfare aspects

of a broad rehabilitation programme aimed at the eventual integration of Indians into the provincial and municipal organization of Canadian society.

The "self-help" aspect of Indian housing is fundamental. It would theoretically be possible, if money was no object, to provide every Indian family with a three-bedroom ranch-style home. Such a paternalistic approach would defeat the "self-help" aspect in the Government's approach to improve Indian housing. The Indian Affairs Branch policy is to foster Indian pride in themselves, their homes and their communities. An energetic programme of assistance to Indians to help them improve their communities is thought to be one of the most effective means of arresting and reversing the vicious cycle of sub-standard housing, unemployment, apathy, ill-health and malnutrition, each feeding on the other.

The Branch could, for example, design prefabricated housing units at a remote headquarters, and erect them with the use of skilled labour imported into Indian communities. While this may provide minimum cost housing, it leaves no room for a contribution on the part of the home-owner, except through cash repayments. It is in cash, however, that the Indian is least able to make his most effective contribution to his home because of poor income levels. His participation must depend, therefore, largely on labour equity and upon community programme for the supply of materials. An Indian should take part in the planning of his home, the financing, the construction and later the maintenance.

One of the problems in upgrading Indian housing is that reserves are often remote from non-Indian communities and urban services. Housing on reserves — especially on the Prairies — is often scattered widely, thus making hydro expensive, and community water and sewer lines virtually out of the question. With the electrification of more and more reserves, it is possible to have pressure systems for wells and flowing water.

The next decade will see many changes in Indian housing, the chief being a fundamentally new approach now being worked out by the government. It is this: that the amount of subsidies for housing will gradually be reduced as the Indians' income rises, and replaced by a housing loan fund. Amendments

to The Indian Act will be necessary to enable adequate security for these loans and the participation of Indian band councils in the same way non-Indian municipalities operate in slum clearance and low-rent projects under the National Housing Act.

Community life on an Indian reserve is essentially rural. While houses are usually scattered along country roads, there are cross-roads centres and in many areas, substantial villages. Like other people living in the country, Indians provide their own recreation. Some bands, using their own funds, have built community halls; others use church halls or school auditoria for dances, socials and meetings. There are boy scout and girl guide packs. There are sports teams among young people, especially for hockey, baseball and softball. Teams often join non-Indian leagues. The school and the church are usually the focal points of these activities.

One of the most important influences at work on the Indian reserve is the Homemakers' Club. In organization, and membership, these clubs are very similar to Women's Institutes and serve as a gathering place for women to exchange ideas and talk over schemes for community betterment. There are now 160 clubs and those in northern and southern Ontario plan their own regional conferences.

The clubs often help poorer Indian mothers; they give Christmas parties and summer picnics; provide scholarships for deserving students; they teach crafts; listen to talks on better home-making, health and education and raise funds by socials and card parties.

Women also belong to many church groups. They are taking a much more active part in local government. They organize home improvement schemes. They run garden contests. They attend leadership training and craft courses.

Through these activities, Indian women are acquiring a persuasive voice on their reserves. They are acquiring a new and important status in Indian life.

## **TOWARDS SELF-GOVERNMENT**

One of the most significant advances the Indian has made in the past 10 years has been his growing interest and participa-



tion in his own band affairs. Indian bands have always had chiefs and usually some form of governing council. The Indian Act simply defines the method of choosing councils and their powers to make laws for the government of each band.

A band council may be chosen by what is known as "band custom" (in the past this usually meant life tenure of office) or by the "elective" system, under which council members are elected by secret ballot for a term of two years. In the past few years more and more bands have adopted the elective system. This is particularly the case in the West. In 1949 only nine bands in the four western provinces chose their councils under the elective system. Today 235 do so. Altogether 365 bands in Canada elect councils for two-years terms; 189 continue to choose their members by the custom of the band.

Band councils vary in size. Each has one chief and from two to 12 councillors, depending on population.

Like so many aspects of Indian life, it is difficult to generalize about band councils. A few, like the Six Nations near Brantford, elect councillors by wards and conduct weekly meetings, following strict parliamentary procedure. They appoint and pay their own secretary and "municipal" employees. Others, representing bands that are more scattered, may hold meetings only two or three times a year, or whenever councillors can get together, for example, at their summer camps. Every Indian band in Canada — and its council — is in a different stage of development.

The policy of the government is to encourage bands to take over more and more responsibility for their own affairs.

In 1951, Indian women were given the vote for the first time in band elections. Since then they have shown a remarkable political consciousness and at the beginning of 1962 there were 15 women chiefs and 89 women councillors currently in office.

Women have also been appointed as treasurers and secretaries of band councils; as members of health committees, school committees and welfare screening groups; and recently as welfare administrators.

They are taking their place beside their menfolk in the development of Canada's 564 Indian bands.

The portents for the future are bright. Although in a state of transition, between traditionalism and technology the Indian has the opportunities now, as never before, to acquire schooling and skills.

In turn the non-Indian can play a part in helping him to adapt to our Canadian society, by acquiring a broader knowledge of these first Canadians, and a more sympathetic awareness of their problems. Integration can be fostered and encouraged, not only by the government, but by communities near Indian reserves. Employment can be offered to men and women. Indians can be welcomed into social and cultural groups. Homes can be opened and friends can be made among Indians.

In mid-twentieth century this is the challenge — to Indian and non-Indian alike.

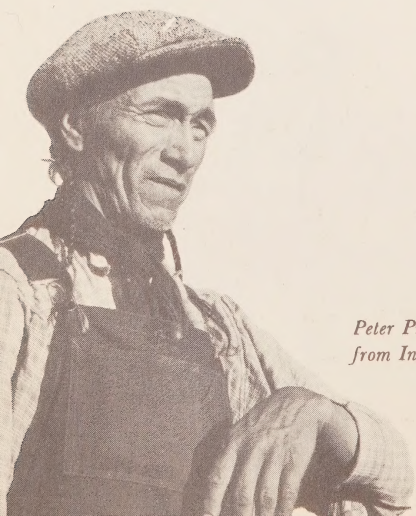
*Guiding is a source of income*



*Future carpenters*

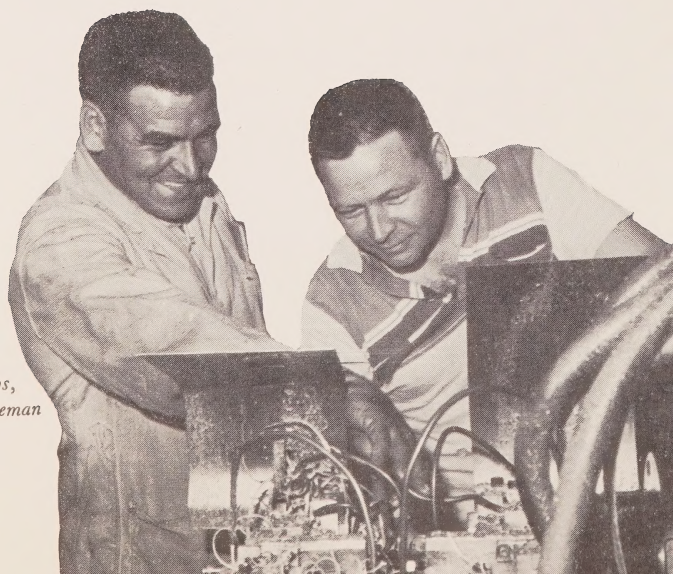






*Peter Prince, a farmer  
from Indian Springs Reserve, Manitoba*

*Dalton Jacobs,  
mechanics foreman*



DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION



INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH

ROGER DUHAMEL, F.R.S.C.

*Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery*  
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